

Two Legends of Malacca

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The "Malay Annals" (Shellabear's romanized *Sĕjarah Mĕ-layu*, 1909, Vol. I, p. 60) record how Sultan Iskandar was hunting near Bertain River, when a white mouse-deer kicked his hunting dog into the water. He chose this spot where mouse-deer were valiant for his new settlement and named it Mĕlaka after a tree (*Phyllanthus pectinatus* of the Order *Euphorbiaceae*) against which he was leaning at the time of the incident.

Now there exists a similar Sinhalese legend of the founding of Candy, a hare and a jackal taking the place of mouse-deer and dog and the hare's courage being ascribed to recoil from a rock that intercepted her flight (Parker's "Village Folk-Tales of Ceylon," 1914, No. 76, Vol. II, p. 3).

In the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* it is related how when they came to Malacca the Portuguese bought as much land as an ox-hide would cover and their captain cut it into strips and so got enough land to erect a large godown (J. R. A. S., S. B. 83, p. 122). Benfey has collected many parallels from mediaeval and modern literature and folk-lore; there is the famous tale of the founding of Carthage, the tale of Hengist in Geoffrey of Monmouth, and another in the French romance *Melusine*; there is the popular etymology of Hyde Park. Popular etymology erroneously finds the same origin for Bhutnair and Calcutta (Todd's "Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan," II, 235; 1852). "Thare-kettaya near the modern city of Prome was built 443 B.C. Its name has to do with a very ancient artifice. 'Facti de nomine byrsam taurino quantum possent circumdare tergo.'" (Scott O' Connor's "Mandalay," p. 301; London, 1907). American Indian attributed the trick to Europeans who bought land from them. In Sanskrit *gotsharman* (lit. cowhide) = "a land measure, one hundred feet long and ten broad."

